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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENS CANCER CARE FOR OTTAWA FAMILES

New MRI Machine and Mobile Radiation Unit To Lower Wait Times

TORONTO- The McGuinty government is continuing to improve cancer care in Ottawa and surrounding areas by providing $1.2 million to support the operation of a new MRI machine at The Ottawa Hospital, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"We are committed to reducing wait times for cancer care services," said Smitherman. "This investment at The Ottawa Hospital will help provide equitable and timely access to cancer care services to assist in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer."

The MRI is expected to be operational in March 2008 and will provide about 4,500 additional scans annually to its patients.

The government is supporting the construction of a new mobile radiation unit at The Ottawa Hospital with a $5.2 million investment. When completed, the mobile unit will provide radiation therapy to 400 patients per year in the Ottawa area.

"The mobile radiation unit is an innovative solution that brings more cancer treatments services to communities that need them," said Dr. Terry Sullivan, President & CEO, Cancer Care Ontario. "This unit will help make sure local patients have timely access to radiation treatment until the redevelopment of the Ottawa Hospital Regional Cancer Centre is complete."

"We are delighted the government is supporting better cancer care services at the Ottawa hospital," said Dr. Jack Kitts, President and CEO of the Ottawa hospital. "This investment will mean faster service and better access to health care services for residents of Ottawa."

"Improving access to care is a key priority for the Champlain Local Health Integration Network, so this is great news for our community," said Marie Fortier, chair of the Champlain LHIN. "These new cancer care services will help patients get the quality health care they deserve."

This is just one more example of how, working together, Ontarians have achieved results in the Champlain LHIN. Other initiatives at the Ottawa Hospital include:

- $9.5 million in funding as part of the Wait Times Strategy to perform 7,800 more MRI exams; 2,614 more CT exams, 1,000 more cataract surgeries, 405 additional cancer surgeries, and 400 more hip and knee total joint replacements at the Ottawa Hospital;
- expanding cancer services at the Ottawa Hospital and building a new satellite cancer centre at the Queensway Carleton Hospital;
- $640,544 in capital funding in 2006/07 to make needed upgrades at The Ottawa Hospital.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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